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Today in World Affairs

Disintegration of C. I. A. Called Goal of Soviet Union

By David Lawrence

WASHINGTON, July 13.—The Soviet Union is looking to its biggest victory in the "cold war"—the possible disruption and disintegration of the Central Intelligence Agency here, which has for many years been a thorn in the side of international Communism.

The Soviet apparatus has worked in many countries to try to break down the intelligence system of its adversaries, but, until recently, nowhere did it encounter such stern resistance to its intrigue as in the United States.

Today, however, Soviet agents look with satisfaction at the controversy they have helped to stir up in this country over the activities of the C. I. A. Long before the Cuban "invasion" episode focused attention on the C. I. A. as a formidable opponent of Communist espionage, the effort has been under way to convince high officials of the American government that the C. I. A. should be split apart or weakened in its operations.

The Soviets do not, of course, work directly. They operate through intermediaries—two and three times removed. Often those who are taken in by the crusades and campaigns of the Communists are totally unaware of it and would be the first to denounce Communist intrigue.

Chance for Attack

It was natural that the Cuban affair should afford a chance for an open attack on the C. I. A. The agitation to get rid of the agency, or at least to change its functions substantially so that it would be far less effective than it now is, has been carried on in various ways.

Finally, President Kennedy took action to get at the root of the controversy. He asked General Maxwell D. Taylor—who, as former chief of staff of the Army, knows the impact of intelligence work on military operations—to make a wide-ranging investigation of the United States intelligence activities. A permanent Presidential board, created in 1956 to check on C. I. A. and other agencies engaged in foreign intelligence, was activated. Dr. James R. Doolittle, of Massachusetts, a citizen, with an objective point of view on controversial matters, who served from 1956 to 1958 as

the first head of the board in the Eisenhower Administration—was reappointed chairman. Summoned to dig into the subject, too, was the President's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who is as anti-Communist as anybody in public life.

Ticklish Question

What does all the studying add up to? Certain changes need to be made to co-ordinate the relations of the C. I. A. with other departments. The question of how secret operations of a quasi-military character shall be conducted is a ticklish one, but by no means unsolvable. The important issue is whether, when all the changes are put into effect, the morale of the C. I. A. will be adversely affected or whether the institution will continue in the same spirit as before its relentless search for information about what the Communists are doing.

The line which the not-so-subtle enemies of C. I. A. are taking is that an agency of this kind is alien to our institutions and should be suppressed, or that it violates the Constitution, or that it is interfering with State Department policy. This is a favorite device—to stir up fallacious and rivalries

between agencies of the government.

The C. I. A. also is accused of fomenting trouble inside foreign countries. Indeed, the Communists put out the story—and many Frenchmen believed it—that the C. I. A. was behind the revolt of the French generals over Algeria. Even high French officials were misled by it, and some French newspapers took it up, though there wasn't a word of truth in the story. President Kennedy said something emphatically to that effect to the French government on his recent visit to Paris.

Bold Manifestation

Perhaps the boldest manifestation of the influences which are behind the scenes in the fight against the C. I. A. is to be found in the demand that the agency give an accounting to Congressional committees not only of its expenditures but of all its activities.

Just as many a hatchet job has been attempted indirectly by the Communists against J. Edgar Hoover and the F. B. I., now comes a bombardment of Allen Dulles, who has directed the C. I. A. since 1953. An extensive propaganda has been launched that could well attract the attention of either the House Committee on Un-American Activities or the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security.

Unhappily, in recent months, both these committees have not been as active as they should be. Maybe it's because the administration has not as yet given the word that it is necessary to do more exposing in order to counteract Communist activities inside the United States and neighboring countries. Maybe it's because Supreme Court decisions have made the task of getting testimony more and more difficult by upholding fifth-amendment pleas, that are plain subterfuges.

As the attack on the C. I. A. develops, there should be an opportunity to find out who is financing the spread of literature inside this country attacking this all-important agency. For if the confidence of Congress in the C. I. A. should be weakened—the main objective of the current campaign—the Kremlin will have won a big advantage in fighting the "cold war."

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